THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SUNDAY • APRIL 06, 2025 • ₹12.00 • PAGES 28 • LATE CITY EDITION

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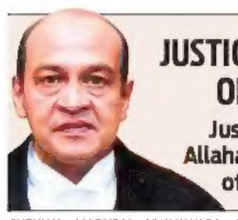

JUSTICE YASHWANT VARMA TAKES OATH OF OFFICE AWAY FROM PUBLIC GAZE

Justice Varma, who was transferred to his parent Allahabad HC, was allegedly administered the oath of office on Saturday in a "clandestine" manner

FALLACIOUS, UNACCEPTABLE: BAR ASSOCIATION

The Allahabad High Court Bar Association, which had opposed the repatriation of the judge from Delhi HC, questioned why his oath was not notified to the Bar and alleged that this act has once again eroded the trust of people in the judicial system. "Legally, the oath administered to Justice Varma is fallacious and unacceptable," said the Bar association

SWORN IN AT CHIEF JUSTICE'S CHAMBER

- An in-house inquiry was ordered by the CJI after sacks of partially burnt currency notes were found in the New Delhi residence of Justice Varma following a fire incident last month, leading to his transfer
- According to sources, Justice Varma was sworn in by Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court Arun Bhansali in his chamber at 9.30 am

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MEMBER PANEL FORMED BY SUPREME COURT TO INQUIRE 'CASH BURN' CASE

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

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India, Lanka ink first-ever defence cooperation pact

Security of both countries interlinked, co-dependent, says Modi

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA and Sri Lanka on Saturday signed an ambitious defence cooperation pact, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi outlining a comprehensive roadmap for deeper bilateral ties and highlighting the interconnected security of both nations, a sentiment reciprocated by president Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

The first defence agreement between the two countries serves as an umbrella framework to restructure existing defence cooperation, focusing on enhancing high-level visits, joint exercises, capacity building, exchanges in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), increasing naval port calls, and exploring defence industry cooperation. "We believe we have shared security interests. The security of both countries is interconnected and co-dependent," Modi said after meeting Sri Lankan president Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a press meet in Colombo Saturday | PTI

The two countries have agreed to work together on the Colombo Security Conclave and Security Cooperation in the Indian Ocean, Modi said.

Dissanayake assured Prime Minister Modi that Sri Lanka will not allow its territory to be used in any way that threatens India's security interests and conveyed to him that Sri Lanka values India's assistance.

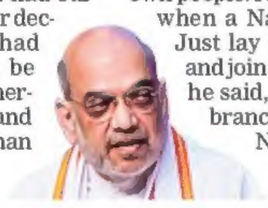
India also signed a trilateral MOU for developing Trincomalee as an energy hub along with the UAE.

Nobody happy when Naxal is killed, says Shah

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday in Dantewada made an appeal to Maoists to surrender and join the mainstream. "Nobody feels happy when a Naxalite is killed," Shah said while reiterating the government's commitment to eliminating left-wing extremism by March 2026.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of Chhattisgarh's Bastar Pandum festival in Dantewada, Shah said the region had suffered from violence for decades, but the time had come for Bastar to be known for its tribal heritage, folk traditions, and development rather than Naxalism.



"The days of bullets and bombs in Bastar are over. I appeal to Naxalite brothers to surrender. You are our own people. No one feels happy when a Naxalite is killed. Just lay down your arms and join the mainstream," he said, offering an olive branch to the outlawed Naxal movement.. Shah emphasised that those who surrender will be fully protected by both the Union and state governments and integrated into the region's development. He said 521 Naxalites surrendered in 2025 following 881 in 2024. Villages aiding surrenders will get ₹1 crore for development, he said, apart from announcing that Bastar Pandum featuring tribal artists will go national next year.

COVID 'SCAM' REPORT

Trouble likely for guilty in Bommai govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

JUSTICE Michael D'Cunha Commission, which probed the alleged irregularities in the procurement of medicines and medical equipment, and deaths due to mismanagement during the COVID-19 pandemic under the BJP rule, presented its second interim report to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah here on Saturday.

There might be recommendations against the guilty in the previous BJP regime headed by former CM Basavaraj Bommai with Dr K Sudhakar as health minister, the sources said.

The seven-volume report runs into 1,808 pages and it covers four zones of BBMP such as Bommanahalli, South, West and Yelahanka, and four districts of Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Gadag and Koppal. The report will be tabled at the next cabinet meeting.

Though the contents of the second report have not been made public, it might have similar findings as in the first.

In the second report, the commission might have mentioned a multi-crore scam and recommended action against those responsible for it, including some top health officials, the sources said.

CONTINUED ON P4

EXPRESS READ

Truckers warn of strike from April 15

Bengaluru: Truckers in Karnataka have decided to go on an indefinite strike from April 15 if the state government does not roll back the diesel price hike. Nearly 9 lakh trucks and other vehicles will remain off the roads P7

Country needs UCC, says Karnataka HC

Bengaluru: The Karnataka High Court requested the Union and state governments to make concerted efforts to enact a law on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) to achieve equality for all women in India as enshrined in the Constitution | P7

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